

Great Western Railway

On Friday I inflicted a journey by rail to Cardiff and back on myself.

GWR spent a fortune on designing and buying very uncomfortable seats. They have little padding and a severe back angle. They quickly give you back ache. The HS 120 seats they replaced were more comfortable .

I had a pre booked seat on my ticket. Once again the seat booking system was not working on the outbound train. Fortunately there were some seats. The train had been cut back to just five coaches. It did run to time which was an important bonus.

On the way home they cancelled one train. My train arrived late and was crowded thanks to the cancellation which had left many people waiting on the platform. The train continued to run late.

Car parking was expensive at Reading. Getting a taxi back to Cardiff Station required making an advance payment to a taxi firm, a new hazard. Fortunately the taxi did turn up to honour the contract. Overall it was an expensive way of travelling with plenty of car and taxi diesel as well as the electricity for the train on a day of little renewable power. Far from green.

The lack of flexibility with the ticket meant I had to get the train specified even though I could have made an earlier one which would have had more space.

The train controllers in Whitehall need to relax their controls more, or take a more intelligent interest in why potential users of the railway have poor experiences. Uncomfortable trains can be remedied . Inflexible ticketing can be changed, Poor timetabling to manage demand can be optimised without cancellations. Much more thought needs to be given to how a person travels to and from the stations. This link and cost is an integral part of a so called train journey and often falls foul of anti taxi/car schemes in the centres of cities and towns near stations. It adds to delays and frustrations.

I could have been better off driving by motorway to Cardiff, avoiding the centre and urban area of Cardiff with the station altogether. I went to a venue close to a motorway exit.

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